A MOST STRANGE and wonderfull Herring, taken on the 26. day of Nouember 1597. neere vnto Drenton ſometime the old and chiefe Cittie of the kingdome of Norway.

Hauing on the one ſide the picture of two armed men fighting, and on the other moſt ſtrange Characters, as in the picture is here expreſſed.

First printed in Dutch at Roterdam by *Ian van Doetecum. And now tranſlated into Engliſh.*

¶ Repent, for the kingdome of God is at hand.

14

SIBI CANT SOLI

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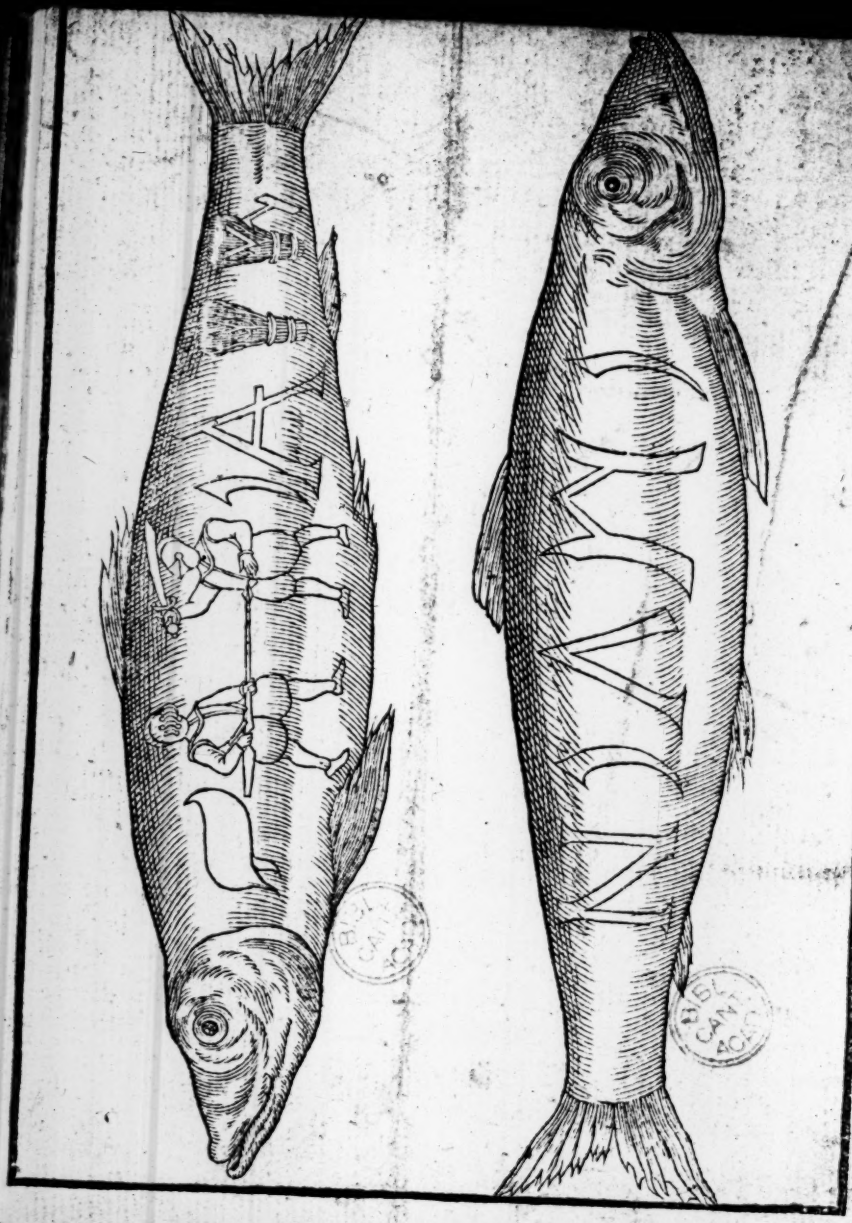
Repent for the kingdome of God is at hand.

THe Lord God of heauen, the moſt righteous and mightie iudge of the world, neuer intends to inflict plagues or punishmentes on any Countrey, Cittie, or nation, but firſt it pleaſeth him of his vnſpeakeable mercie, to forewarne the ſame countrey, cittie, or nation thereof, by the mouthes of his Prophets, and other miniſters of his worde, or elſe by his wonderfull ſignes and tokens ſhewed in the heauens, the earth, or other his creatures, that thereby the people may be induced to forſake their former wickednesſe, and to learne amendment and newneſſe of life. Examples hereof we haue in Geneſis, how many tokens of his wrath did the Lord ſhew vnto Pharao, before his deſtruction in the red ſea: Likewiſe before Sodome was conſumde with fire from heauen, it is written that Abraham had knowledge thereof, and intreated the Lord to ſpare it: but ſuch were the ſinnes of that curſed Cittie, that his prayers could not preuaile. Againe, more then the ſpace of an hundred yeares before the

waters drowned the worlde, had Noah warning to build ỹ Arke, and long it was ere hee finished that worke, insomuch that the children of men made a scorne thereof, and so farre were they from grace, that no warning at all they toke thereby. The Niniuites hauing warning repented at the preaching of Ionas: but Ierusalem was nothing moued though Christ Iesus himselfe foretold their destruction: for which cause sorrow came vpon them as vpon a woman when she trauelleth. The signs and tokens which the Lord sent ouer that Cittie before their fall were many and marueilous, notwithstanding they persisted in their sinnes, and flattering themselues in their owne follies, made false interpretations of those prodigious wonders. Seeing then that as the Apostle saith, that whatsoeuer is written, is written for our learning, let all Christians take warning hereby, not iestingly to ioyne themselues together (as they did in the old world) to deride or falsely to interpret the dreadfull tokens sent among vs, lest with them of Ierusalem destruction do suddenly come vpon vs. I haue here to shew you a strange and wonderfull token of Gods wrath figured forth in a silly Herring, in which smal fish by doth demonstrate great and dreadfull matters as by the picture you may perceiue: on the one side whereof you may plainely behold the perfect shape of two armed men, the one hauing in his hand a launce, the other a sword, close buckled in their corslets, with burgants on their heades, standing as it were in their defence, threatning and assayling one another. I know that many will giue as small credit hereunto, and as sleightly esteeme thereof as Pharao did of the flies, & the Iewes of Christs miracles: notwithstanding the Lord hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weake to ouercome the mighty, as he himselfe hath expressed in his holy Gospell. Moreouer there was toward the taile of this Herring the right portraiture of two rods, the one farre bigger then the other, seeming to bee

bound

bound together with two ſtrong bandes apéece, which euery man muſt confeſſe to bee the vndoubted ſigne of dreadfull correction: according as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, ſaying: Thou ſhalt bruſe them with a rod of Iron, and breake them in peeces like a Potters veſſell. In ſcripture ſword and peſtilence is ſaid to be the ſcourges of the Lord: and therefore that cruel and bloody tyrant Tamberlaine did iuſtly call himſelfe the ſcourge of God, by whom he corrected the proud, rebellious and wicked world: bringing by bloody wars many kingdomes into his ſubiection. If we enter then into due conſideration hereof, and with the eyes of grace behold the ſame, we cannot but confeſſe, that the righteous Lord hath ſent theſe ſignes vnto vs, to forewarne vs of our wickednelſe, leaſt by the ſharpe correcting rods of Gods wrath wee be moſt iuſtly puniſhed with ſword and famine. But now behold on the other ſide of this Herring, were fiue Characters moſt perfectly ingrauen, ſome of them vſual, and wel knowne among vs at this day, others ſtrange and not vnderſtood: but what the God of all power and might will giue hereby to be knowen is left to better iudgement, notwithſtanding let vs remember, that as it once pleaſed God by the finger of his power to write on the wall a heauie ſentence againſt Balthaſar, ſo hath it pleaſed him at this preſent to write on this Herring vndoubtedly a heauie ſentence againſt the ſinnes of this age, thereby to call this drowſie world out of the damnable ſléepe of ſinne and wickednes, wherein it hath lugged ſo long a time. Then what is he that ſéeing the ſame, and dreading the hot vengeance of the Lord, will not be inforced with Balthaſar to ſhake and tremble at the grieuous iudgements which is therby likely to bee threatned: if Balthaſar being a heathen King, ſhooke ſo ſore at the handwriting on the wall, wel may all Chriſtians harts ſhake to ſée, and therewithall to conſider what fearefull ſentence may vpon the Herring be engrauen. When our Sauiour Chriſt did write vpon the

ground, before those that accused the woman of adulterie, her accusers were therby so confounded in conscience, that for very shame they slipt away out of his sight: how much more then may we be confounded at the sight & interpretation of these strange characters, which the Lord hath not written on the ground in the dust of the earth, but in the very meat which we should eat, thereby (as it were) laying his iudgements in our dishes, at euery meale to be remembred. For who is ignorant that among the fishes of the sea, there is none so common at our table as the Herring, no fish more vsed in any land, nor better knowne among all sorts of people: whereby it is iustly to be gathered, that the Lord hath sent it for a generall warning vnto his people: the Lord grant our heartes may be moued thereby. Moreouer, this Herring was full foure téene inches in length: importing (as I coniecture) that this iudgement threatned against the world for sinne is an extraordinarie and no vsuall iudgement, but such as the eyes of men haue seldome or neuer séene: besides, the markes were all of red and bloody colour. The Lord for Christes sake be merciful vnto vs, & giue vs grace with such repenting harts to turne from our sinnes, that he may turne his iust wrath from vs. This Herring among a number of others was taken on the 26. day of Nouemb. 1597. nére vnto Drenton, sometime the ancient and chiefe Cittie of the kingdome of Norway. And after it was shewn to diuers of the nobility, & magistrates of that countrey. The portraiture thereof & admonition was first printed in Roterdam, by Iohn van Doetecum in the Dutch tongue, & out of the same language translated into English, for the profite and instruction of our countrey people. The Lord God Almighty giue vs grace to watch and waite for the comming of the heauenly bridegroome, that being decked and attired in the true wedding garment of Christes righteousnes, we may enter with him to the heauenly banket, there to raigne in his glorious kingdome for euermore, Amen.

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